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## FROM CULTURAL GOVERNANCE TO CULTURAL TOURISM: TOWARDS AN INTERPRETATION PERSPECTIVE

RUI SU AND HUIFEN (HELEN) CAI

Middlesex Business School, Middlesex University, London, UK

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The debate of “cultural turn” has recently drawn scholars’ attentions to the cultural dimension of tourism, particularly how and to what extent cultural symbols and languages make meaning in tourism production and consumption. This requires tourism scholars examining symbolic elements of culture and embedding them in tourism presentations, such as tourist products and service experiences. The authors attempt to address cultural dynamics between symbolism and signification and to illustrate their relationships within tourism through the studies of cultural governance and cultural tourism. Employing a qualitative approach with 85 semistructured interviews and secondary data, a case study of cultural tourism in Nanjing, China illustrates how the tourism and culture sectors selectively signify the tourism image—“A City of Universal Love”—with Nanjing’s cultural governance ideology. The interpretation and the marketing of this city tourism image also show several tensions—for example, the cultural sector holds greater power to represent own its interests, but is less successful in promoting interactive heritage experience to the domestic tourism market. This study offers a new insight of cultural dynamics, notably symbolism and signification dynamics influence governance, interpretation, and marketing of city tourism image.

**Key words:** Symbolism and signification; Cultural governance; Cultural tourism; Power relations; Interpretation; City tourism image

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### Introduction

Very little research has been conducted on cultural dynamics, and symbolism and signification are rarely discussed from cultural governance to cultural tourism marketing (Capi & Srakar, 2012; C. M. Hall, 2011). The traditional semiotic analysis of culture mainly focuses on signifier (image, word, or sound) and signified (meaning or concept).

Cultural heritage, for example, is often symbolized in national narratives or embedding political purposes in patriotic education (Yan & Bramwell, 2008). Park (2014) argued cultural heritage is often represented within state-centered and official interpretations, as a symbolic signifier of power. Cultural heritage tourism thus promotes such cultural significance and universal cultural values associated with national interests and authorities.

However, there is no clear answer as to what extent culture is able to open to tourism (Lash & Urry, 1994). Culture professionals may concern cultural significance, its aesthetic components, and symbolic values whereas tourism mainly prioritizes the use of culture for tourism economy. When tourism professionals interpret the multi-level meanings of culture, they need to be well concerned with culture, not only as a promoted sign but also a meaning-maker in the local setting and experience (Kharlamov, 2012). This difference on the other side may bring a potential gap between cultural interpretation and tourism implementations, such as wider cultural heritage representations mainly facilitate the learning purposes but not yet fully integrate with tourist engagement and experiences.

A call for cultural governance is necessary to move from pure aesthetic value of culture to its multidimensional implementations, such as embedding culture's sectoral and functional roles into wider policy-making and administrative operations (C. M. Hall, 2011). Cultural governance in this sense sets rule systems to regulate cultural meanings and interpretations (Rosenau, 1992), as well as signifying different actors' interests and priorities.

The authors argue to transform cultural dynamics from pure cultural communication studies to cultural tourism application. Cultural tourism has been comprehensively discussed in terms of its functions and roles in destination management. Historic legacies, civil achievements, and associations as knowledge and information signifiers play roles as city marketing symbols to attract economic activities and investment (Chang & Huang, 2005; Richards, 1996). People also engage in this experiential consumption for various purposes, such as "visiting historic or archaeological sites, being involved in community festivals, watching traditional dances or ceremonies, or merely shopping for handcrafted art" (Besculides, Lee, & McCormick, 2002, p. 303). In this light, culture and tourism are seen as interdependent, with tourism raising awareness of the cultural values and cultural significance of a destination. At the same time, tourism can create tensions (e.g., through the overexploitation and commercialization of cultural resources). Thus, while the culture sector is often responsible for preserving and protecting assets, the tourism

sector focuses on marketing and commercialization (du Cros & McKercher, 2015).

Cultural tourism also offers individuals opportunities to travel from other places and to construct their own identities in the engagement of cultural significance and cultural meanings. Especially cultural tourists, who prefer specific cultural meanings and values, would like to seek local cultural presentations from performance, language, skills, and local traditions. This touristic reflexivity enables knowledge and information to accumulate in tourism production and consumption, as well as in contemporary cultural economy.

The notion of tourism and cultural dynamics, in addition, reflects the dialectic relationships between culture and urban dynamics. Rapid urbanization, for example, encourages city tourism and human mobility so both tourists and local can appreciate local cultural heritage as well as cocreating new layers of local culture in their everyday lives. A report on Chinese historic towns shows that "70% of main street buildings are used for catering tourists, while leaving merely 10.42% for local residents" (Lu, Chi, & Liu, 2015, p. 86; see also Bao & Su, 2004). In addition, tourism gentrification in many cities also creates potential cultural displacement between tourists and artists, so the latter may not be able to afford rising property and then move out from local neighborhoods (Hutton, 2015; Zukin, 1987). To balance such interdependence and tensions, cultural governance is needed in the wider engagement of governance institutions, as well as their collaborations in respond to global and local tourism.

#### Cultural Governance and Cultural Interpretation

Research attention directs toward cultural governance, since the cultural turn shifts from an urban political economy to a new cultural political economy (Zukin, 2003). A variety of cultural activities and cultural investment asks for an efficient governance approach to regulate or self-regulate culture to respond to wider political, economic, and social dynamics (Marková, 2012; Smith & Richards, 2013). Cultural governance provides such a framework for setting systematic rules and regulating cultural actors based on their "formally sanctioned constitutions and charters" (Rosenau, 1992, p. 4).

This type of governance enables cultural actors to include their interests and priorities in policies, while cultural enterprises, artistic groups, and civil organizations can represent their power status in policy design and in administrative and institutional structures (Bianchini, 1999; C. M. Hall, 2011; Hoffman, Fainstein, & Judd, 2003; Ooi, 2013).

Yet very few studies conduct cultural governance in other tourism areas. Traditionally, cultural governance only focuses on culture's functions, such as government collecting public welfare or projecting a civilization's culture (Cadavez, 2013), or its sectoral roles in representing different "subjects, institutions and ideas" (Schmitt, 2011, p. 26). Lazzertti and Cinti (2009), for example, conceptualized cultural cluster-based governance, which integrates cultural policies into urban regeneration and also into regional innovation. The cultural sector may prefer governance in a single disciplinary group, which often shares the same values, resources, and networks (Schroeder, 2015). However, whether cultural governance moves its symbolic analysis in cultural policy and historical discourses to wider social science applications is still underdeveloped.

Rather, the authors argue an interpretation approach to cultural governance, and particularly to further investigate the mutual dependence between tourism and cultural dynamics from cultural governance to cultural tourism application. Tourism is seen as a relationship of mutual dependence with culture, and with relatively equal participation in "goal-setting, policy-making, problem-solving and change; delegation of authority; worker autonomy; structural decentralization; information-sharing; and sharing rewards, profits, and other valued outcomes" (Coleman, 2009, p. 135). This mutual dependence ensures that the tourism sector speaks the same policy language as the culture, as well as balancing the two interests and priorities in a reciprocal way, such as through cultural tourism (Fairclough, 2013). Wang and Bramwell (2012) examined how the governance institutions, particularly the state, lead the strategic administration of other actors and implement power in cultural heritage-tourism relations (Airey & Chong, 2010).

Therefore, interpretation is important to transform cultural significance and cultural meanings into tourist experiences; for example, tour guide and visual interpretation techniques are often designed

to make more meaningful cultural experiences to the tourists (du Cros & McKercher, 2015). One conceptual model developed by Puczkó (2006) concerns the process of the interpretation of cultural meanings. In this model, a consistent process links the sender and the receiver and transfers messages from one side to the other. The producers who send the messages are on one side, while the consumers or the audience are "decoders and receivers on the other" (Finnegan, 1997, p. 139). Cultural messages can be sent between producers and consumers, whereby the existing or possibly new meanings can be created (Puczkó, 2006). This flow process enables messages to be transformed into valuable material, assisted by interactive media and interpretative tools.

Although Puczkó's (2006) model addresses the key components of interpretation, it remains a theoretical construct without consistent and practical application in cultural governance and cultural tourism. Without such applications, the model should be evaluated in relation to specific practices in different destinations. However, this model does begin to alert us to the fact that the symbolism and significance dynamics have not been fully explored in tourism settings.

### Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism is regarded as a cultural meaning-making process in tourism, including interpreting cultural significance and values in tourism production and consumption. In a touristic sense, cultural significance encourages people to leave home to gain cultural experiences, such as learning about the past or experiencing contemporary ways of life (Smith & Richards, 2013; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2009). Cultural tourists are interested in meaningful cultural experiences, and cultural tourism can offer a communicative opportunity that tourists can understand the semiosis of culture, particularly the symbols and meanings are articulated to make meaningful experiences between tourists and cultural presentations (Staricco, 2017). People may also participate in festivals or artistic performance as a way of understanding local ways of life (Richards, 2011). Thus, cultural tourism can cater for tourists' desire to experience and to understand

local culture. This interdependence between culture and tourism requires sharing cultural symbols and meanings in the same discourse (S. Hall, 1997).

On the other side, tourism conveys specific cultural meanings or stories in cultural signs, but sometimes may not fully interpret culture in the ways required by the cultural sector or by the tourists, and thereby they may not be able to understand, negotiate, or communicate. Instead, tourists may create their own understanding or experience of sites, which may not associate with the prioritized tourism and culture sectors (Buzinde & Santos, 2009). One of the few relevant researches completed by Alberti and Giusti (2012) showed that tourism and cultural heritage can engage in a new form of cluster, where they are beneficially tied together for regional competitiveness. Their research opens a new discussion on the relationships between culture and tourism, but not yet in the symbolizing process and future application in city destination marketing. Saraniemi and Kylänen (2011) also argued that cultural tourists can reproduce their own identities and make mutual cultural connections with the place they visit.

The authors also argue that tourism should take a regulatory role in the governance of culture, so tourist spending can be transformed into cultural conservation and towards a sustainable use of culture and heritage. Cultural heritage professionals are often conservative in their views towards tourism, which may leave insufficient opportunities for tourism's individuals and professionals in policy decision-making or distribution of cultural heritage resources (Lammers & Galinsky, 2009). However, tourism in historical tourist cities can help to assemble historical objectives, package them from history into the heritage experiences, and embed them in contemporary society (Ashworth, 1994; Skinner, 2013). It is strongly assumed that being part of cultural governance enables tourism to represent environmental and cultural sensitivity in the tourist experience (Smith & Richards, 2013).

The authors attempt to examine symbolism and signification dynamics, particularly to transform their relationships from cultural governance to cultural tourism, through an interpretation approach. The focus is on the process of tourism interpreting

culture in governance, as well as that interpretation influencing city's tourism image and destination marketing.

### Application in Nanjing, China

The authors selected the case of Nanjing city, due to the major changes in China's recent economy, society, politics, and governance. China has undergone a gradual but substantial transformation from a centrally planned economy to a more market-oriented economy with Chinese characteristics (Sofield & Li, 2011). There is a long-standing tradition of commerce and entrepreneurialism in China that has reemerged after a period of suppression. This is being one influence encouraging domestic tourism's dramatic expansion. Chinese society continues to value social order and harmony, and often also to believe in the subordination of individual desires to the greater whole (Sofield & Li, 2011). Governance is characterized by the retention but also evolution of a strong state sector, which continues to be led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Despite the absence of any significant shift towards Western forms of democratic governance within this one-party state, there has been some greater tolerance of dissenting voices.

Cultural tourism in Nanjing is a particular motivation for tourists visiting and for locals living, working, and doing business. Nanjing, the current capital of Jiangsu Province, is located near to Shanghai with manufacturing and service sector industries, positioning Nanjing on the relatively wealthy eastern coast of China, notably Yangtze River Metropolitan area. This city previously was the national capital during three important historic periods: the Six Dynasties (220–589) period, the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) period, and the Republic of China (1919–1949) period. The city's numerous cultural heritage resources and its cultural tourism mark the influence of China's very different cultural historical development and its distinctive and evolving socioeconomic and political features. Many cultural, artistic, and media activities play an important role in enhancing tourists' visiting experiences and meeting residents' cultural demands.

Nanjing city's tourism industry revenues in 2012 were 127 billion Chinese Yuan (Chinese currency,

also called CNY) (Nanjing Tourism Bureau, 2012). The city also attracted over 1.6 million inbound tourists and over 79 million domestic tourists in 2012, served by 535 travel agencies and 155 hotels (Nanjing Tourism Bureau, 2012). These dynamic political and historical changes can explain why Nanjing has rich historic and cultural legacies that are conducive to cultural tourism development and contemporary cultural diversity.

### Method

The authors employed a qualitative research and collected primary and secondary data to examine the complex culture and tourism dynamics in Nanjing's case study, particularly to avoid invalid interpretation and personal bias (Bryman, 2001; Decrop, 1999; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Finnegan, 2006; Yin, 2009).

Purposive sampling was used to target interviewees who were being actively involved in culture and tourism sectors, and had sufficient knowledge and awareness to be able to answer the research questions. Therefore, the authors purposively selected Culture and Tourism government officials, the managers of travel agencies, cultural and heritage sites, and souvenirs shops. These interviewees could be informative as they were experts on or privileged witnesses to cultural tourism (Maxwell, 2005; Weiss, 1994). In particular, some were key stakeholders having a strategic view of Nanjing's cultural tourism and having relatively rich industrial experience in Nanjing city marketing.

The authors targeted tourists at Nanjing's cultural heritage sites by considering McKercher and du Cros's (2002) typology of cultural tourists and Richards' (2001) typology of cultural tourism attractions. McKercher and du Cros (2002) conceptualized cultural tourists according to their experiences of, and motivations towards, cultural tourism. Richards (2001) also classified cultural tourism attractions based on their forms from past to present, and their functions, from education to entertainment. Therefore, selection criteria were applied to filter the tourists in the field sites. This also helped to reduce the sample size, considering the limited time and budget available (Wong & Lau, 2001). The selection criteria were:

- respondents who sought a cultural experience through experiencing Nanjing's culture and history,
- respondents who identified cultural tourism as their most important reason for visiting Nanjing,
- respondents who had been to Nanjing's cultural tourism attractions.

Two phases of 85 semistructured interviews were conducted from February to April 2011 and from May to June 2012. The intention was to gain a holistic understanding of Nanjing's culture and tourism sectors and especially to establish the scope of the key elements and issues in Nanjing's cultural tourism. The authors in the first phase of interviews sought to assess the relevance of the main themes and achieved an adequate number and depth of responses, including 32 cultural tourism providers and 31 tourists.

After the first phase of interviews, the authors analyzed the data to achieve preliminary results. The application of Puczko's (2006) interpretation model allowed the authors to categorize the broader themes and subthemes, and also specific examples as applicable according to the Nanjing case. These broader issues were able to clarify some "what" questions, such as "What are the key responsibilities of the Culture Department in Nanjing?" and "What are the key roles of the culture and tourism sectors in Nanjing's cultural tourism?" However, they were too descriptive to illustrate how and to what extent tourism interprets culture in the governance process and also in destination marketing management. In particular, some new subthemes emerged from the Nanjing case, which were specifically affected by the rapid sociocultural changes in China. These new subthemes needed further exploration in the second phase of interview, which were conducted between May and June 2012, with 14 providers and 8 tourists.

A wide range of secondary data was also collected from government policies and plans, newspapers, industrial reports, books, and social media sites. Some internal governmental and organizational policies and plans were highly valuable, as they were not accessible to the public. All of the official documents were obtained with the permission of the interviewees, on the basis that they would only be used for scholarly research.



Thematic content analysis was used for coding data, as well as examining the relationships between and among the themes for data interpretation (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). This qualitative data analysis could help to explore the research phenomenon—that is, how tourism and culture interact in the interpretation process, and to what extent its applications are affected in the governance and destination marketing.

Two coding processes were explained, with the aid of NVivo 10 software. The first coding process was to define the concepts (topic coding), identify the relationships and problematic issues (analytical coding), and specify them in the selected Nanjing case (descriptive coding) (<http://download.qsrinternational.com/Document/NVivo10/NVivo10-Getting-Started-Guide.pdf>). At the end of that process, the researchers were conscious of 228 free nodes (e.g., interpretation, governance, tourist experience) as the literal essence of the data (Rivas, 2012). The second coding process was for data reduction. It was a process of “selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10). Giving consideration to the nodes’ meanings, similarities, and differences, the second coding process yielded seven tree nodes, constructed by free nodes’ relations, while avoiding the omission of the raw data (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005).

#### Governance of Nanjing’s Cultural Tourism

Nanjing city’s tourism image symbolized the transformation from cultural governance to cultural tourism, associated with the interdependence between tourism and cultural dynamics. Both culture and tourism sectors had common interests to select, assemble, and symbolize the most unique and attractive cultural heritage resources into the city’s tourism image to achieve a mutual dependence in the governance of Nanjing’s cultural tourism (Bramwell, 2011; Bramwell & Meyer, 2007). For example, there were several roundtable consultancy meetings, inviting a wide range of culture and tourism actors from cultural government officials, cultural heritage experts, urban planners, tourism practitioners, site managers, and local representatives. These participants mainly discussed

and negotiated the image proposal, based on data from consultant questionnaires, interviews, and market research. The governance institutions were also able to select the most significant cultural heritage resources in the tourism image’s interpretation. This governance approach ensured what actors symbolized to represent the significance of Nanjing’s cultural heritage, as well as balancing their own interests, priorities, and power relations (Macleod & Carrier, 2010).

In this sense, the tourism sector also expressed tourists’ perspectives to share administrative responsibilities with the culture sector, and thereby both could meet for the market demand. Many cultural and tourism actors agreed that this mutual dependence allowed them to transform policy planning to practical application, based on the shared common interests, responsibilities, and practices. One of the cultural government officials explained how they shared their responsibilities from “identifying the issues and future trend of culture market and caring civilization achievement for social cohesion.” Another tourism official highlighted some tourism responsibilities for “assembling and developing tourism products and service, reviewing tourism planning and regulations, and monitoring tourist attractions, facilities, and related activities.” Both culture and tourism had to cooperate to share these responsibilities, so that the new cultural tourism products and service could meet new trends for marketing. One director of a local travel agency believed that:

Chinese tourists have increasing demand in tourism, in which they can relax and enjoy other experiences away from their own home and work. Cultural tourism recently becomes more popular because it offers tourists opportunities to learn differences and also to reflect themselves in travel.

The shared administrative responsibilities and interests thus encouraged both culture and tourism sectors to assemble the most significant cultural heritage resources and then to symbolize them in the city’s tourism image. This mutual dependence also reflected the dialect relationships between cultural symbolism and significance, through transforming different governance institutions’ interests into the symbolic practices, notably Nanjing city’s tourism image.

### Interpretation of Nanjing City's Tourism Image

Nanjing city's tourism image, "A City of Universal Love," was symbolized with specific cultural signs, including visual symbols of a memorial archway, a dove, and a plum blossom. The city authorities selected these semiotic branding elements to convey the city's historical association with Sun Yat-sen, who was the first president of the Republican era (1912–1949). As the "father of the country," Sun is respected for advocating the "Three Principles of the People," which were influenced by Abraham Lincoln's notion of government of the people, by the people, and for the people (Shiffrin, 1968). His governance ideology was translated as "nationalism, democracy and socialism" (Mitter, 2004, p. 142), and it mainly represented Sun's notion of "universal love," with the two Chinese characters (bo ai) being displayed on a memorial archway at his Mausoleum in Nanjing. In addition, a dove of peace followed by the slogan, "universal love," and further represented the message of peace, related to the historical backdrop of the Nanjing Massacre in 1937. The symbolic design delivered a message that the Chinese should abandon hatred, be tolerant and generous, and love peace and the world.

The selected components represented Nanjing's historical significance, as a leading center of new political thinking and cultural empowerment in China. The theme of "Republican" culture, for instance, was understandable by domestic tourists mostly, not only because of its similar cultural connection, but also its representation of Sun's governance ideology. A city tourism official explained why,

The Republican period of culture and history is the uniqueness of Nanjing. Most of nationals have learnt this history since school, so its representation in Nanjing city's tourism image can be more understandable by most of domestic tourists.

The symbolic representation of "universal love" continued Sun's governance ideology of "love people" and represented the state's political role, such as the state would promote cultural resources and protect social welfare. The meaning of "love people," in particular, enabled the culture and tourism departments to care about the citizens' cultural needs and give more concern to their livelihoods

in global tourism (Anderson, 2006). A city cultural official explained how the Chinese government undertook this governance role: "The Chinese political leaders often visit museums, historical sites and other cultural heritage sites in order to present their political power in the governance of society, particularly prioritizing on building a harmonious society."

Meanwhile, tourists might not directly interpret "love people" in the way President Sun and the Chinese government used to do, but they felt Nanjing's local people were very friendly, open-minded, and mostly caring and hospitable. Thus, a tourist explained the word "love" with a broader meaning, as a characteristic that, "increases local pride, regulates residents' behaviors, and forms a friendly, welcoming and harmonious environment." Two domestic tourists noted how Nanjing's tourism branding helped to establish an image of a welcoming, equal, and tolerant city:

The rich history and cultural background have made Nanjing a more tolerant city, so it can accept cultural diversity and modernization. The meaning of universal love embedded in the Republican historic image also represents Nanjing's cultural identity, which is unique and differs from other cities nearby, such as Suzhou and Hangzhou.

This finding is consistent with Buzinde and Santos (2009), who argued that individual tourists may challenge the predominant heritage interpretation, thereby developing their own approaches and interpretations during their tourism experiences (Yankholmes & McKercher, 2015). Most tourists were also motivated by Nanjing's cultural atmosphere, which they believed to enhance the city's cultural inclusion (Harvey, 2012).

### Marketing Nanjing City's Tourism Image

An effective marketing image can attract tourists to places they might not have visited if not for that image (Sofield & Li, 2011). The city authorities aimed to use cultural symbols to reinforce Nanjing's distinctiveness as a domestic tourist destination, so the dominant image of "universal love" could later be used as the city marketing slogan (Bramwell & Rawding, 1996; Kotler, 1991). Nanjing Tourism Bureau presented this image as a promotional



message on its official website, for instance. A city tourism official explained how:

The “universal love” was drawn up by Nanjing Tour Bureau, who first used it in the city marketing tour in Chongqing in March, 2003. As this image was highly praised, it gradually became the city’s marketing slogan.

Most governance institutions also cooperated in the image design and in marketing Nanjing city as an urban tourist destination. One city tourism official noted that the city government took the main responsibility to “assemble the sites managers and travel agencies’ directors and promote Nanjing in the China International Travel Mart (CITM) and Shanghai World Expo.”

However, the governance, interpretation, and marketing of “universal love” reflected the imbalanced power relations between culture and tourism. In the Nanjing case, the cultural sector had strong authority in planning and regulating cultural heritage resources, while tourism with lower power status had limited chances to represent its own voices. This illustrates Bramwell’s (2011) point that powerful actors can easily control the decision-making process and affect the final decision, but the less powerful actors may only express their opinions without detailed solutions to the problems. Most cultural governmental officials viewed tourism as a pure marketing behavior. Instead of utilizing cultural heritage resources, tourism was criticized for its negative influences in destroying cultural values and lack of appreciation of cultural significance. One of the urban planners admitted that:

Cultural heritage was preserved seriously under the Chinese cultural laws, so any projects related to that should be monitored by the cultural authority. Tourism only recently has its own tourism law, which however has not yet been fully implemented in practice. In most actions within the industry, tourism has to consult the culture sector first about any use of cultural heritage, in order to avoid any potential damage.

Tourism’s lower power status also meant the marketing image might only represent the cultural authority’s interests, and be less well promoted in the wider domestic tourism market. One of the tourism experts argued that the current image was

mainly based on the Chinese interpretation system, without fully considering international tourists’ characteristics and their potential experiences at destinations. Several scholars, such as Lee and Balchin (1995), Rockmore (2004), and Xu, Cui, Ballantyne, and Packer (2013) highlighted the fact that differences between Eastern and Western aesthetics can diversify interpretations and on-site experiences. The Nanjing city’s tourism image showed that the Chinese authority symbolized the cultural heritage resources in specific cultural signs, in particular these imaginative signs, linked to the China’s political and governance ideology, were also embedded in spiritual experiences and poetic context.

In addition, Nanjing’s heavy history and Sun’s failure to define socialism imbued the “universal love” image, which was not well promoted more entertaining heritage experience. Most of Nanjing cultural heritage resources were only packed as a learning site or a patriotic educating site, but not an interactive edutainment place (Light, 2017; Waterton & Watson, 2014). A tourism professor explained that:

Nanjing was well known for its rich history, but each historical period did not last very long. Nanjing was the national capital during the Six Dynasties era, but each dynasty lasted a very short time. Nanjing was also the national capital in the Ming Dynasty, but it was later replaced by Beijing. Indeed, Nanjing is well known for Dr. Sun Yat-sen and his national revolution, which however was not successful.

These current heritage presentations would force tourists to learn Nanjing’s history, but prevented them from fully engaging in the destination experience. A proactive participation can and should affect tourists’ experience; in particular, tourists provide their own insights and selectively interpret the past at sensitive heritage sites. However, the Nanjing case did not offer much opportunity for tourists to negotiate with such heritage presentation. One tourism director considered that the way the heritage is currently presented would affect tourists’ experience:

People will become very tired when they are always learning cultural history without any break. From a human philosophy perspective, it

is opposite to the nature of traveling and it cannot provide a relaxing experience.

Nanjing, therefore, was regarded as a miserable city, particularly as the historical objectives and heritage presentations were too sensitive and emotional, and people might find it difficult to feel a sense of interconnection, or have little interest to question the historical presentations. The lack of interactive heritage experience also affected the city's marketing, which lagged behind that of other nearby cities in the Yangtze River Delta Metropolitan area.

### Conclusion

The transformation from cultural governance to cultural tourism responds to calls for the examination between tourism and cultural dynamics. Dicks (2000) also argued for a further analysis in "the cultural-communicative aspects of (cultural) heritage" (p. 62). This research thus moves beyond pure cultural communicative studies to a broad social science understanding of culture and tourism.

The interpretation approach here developed a holistic understanding of cultural symbolism and signification, embedded in cultural and tourism governance institutions' interests, responsibilities, and power relations. The interpretation of the city's tourism image involved the mutual dependence between culture and tourism sectors. The interpretation approach also brought the cultural symbols, governance institutions, and city marketing together as they were dialectic interconnected. From this perspective, cultural governance could transform to cultural tourism application, associated with cultural symbolism and cultural signification dynamics.

Adopting this interpretation approach, the application in Nanjing's case indicated the new insights of tourism and cultural dynamics. The discussion might assist in broadening the scope and attention of research culture and tourism. It also offered new ideas for other scholars to evaluate further research questions in other city destinations.

In the governance of Nanjing cultural tourism, tourism could transform governance institutions' priorities into cultural tourism practices. Both culture and tourism sectors shared their common

administrative responsibilities and interests in order to symbolize a city's tourism image and to meet the market demand. This transformation responded to the suggestions by Richards (2010) that "the closer links between tourism and culture are also reflected in governance structures at national and regional levels. At least 25 countries have combined administrative structures for culture and tourism" (p. 48). In a future study, policy makers and destination managers could assess their own roles as signifiers, and interpret cultural tourism with the consideration of their mutual dependence and potential tensions.

The example of Nanjing city's tourism image, "A City of Universal Love," has also addressed the relationship between tourism and symbolism and signification dynamics. The selected components of the "universal love" image interpreted how governance institutions imbedded cultural symbols with political ideology as well as signified in the city's marketing promotion. However, the culture sector, with greater decision-making power, mainly interprets its own cultural interests and priorities, but does less to promote interactive heritage experiences to the domestic tourism market. This tension has limited tourism's power status and the marketing of Nanjing's tourism image, which failed to promote Nanjing as a competitive urban tourism destination.

In the marketing of Nanjing city's tourism image, it indicated the unbalanced power relations, which left the city's marketing falling behind the regional competition. The study found a significant political influence on sensitive interpretation of history. The interpretations offered in many of Nanjing's tourist attractions and cultural facilities could at times fall down by comparison with tourists' expectations. This issue may require policy makers, urban planners, and managers to consider the interpretation of cultural tourism, not only as a specific product but also as a holistic destination experience. Policy makers and managers in private sector organizations potentially could improve their practices if they consider this research in the future.

Although this research has achieved most of aim and objectives, it has a few limitations. One is the limited application in the cultural creative sector, such as festivals, performances, and events, and

their integration with tourism. These cultural elements are important parts of cultural diversity and contribute to a wide range of tourist experiences in urban destinations. Due to the limited budget and time, these elements were not fully explored, but were discussed in general terms in relation to the cultural governance process. Future research could seek more practical examples towards an in-depth understanding of urban cultural tourism.

A second potential limitation arises from confining this research to a single case study of Nanjing city. A single case study is necessary to investigate a complicated research phenomenon, which cannot be isolated from its political, economic, and socio-cultural context (Yin, 2009). Nanjing's cultural tourism is a social phenomenon, so it seems reasonable to select just a single case as representative of China's rich history and dynamic urbanization. Such an integrated study ideally needs applying to multiple cases in China, and to different cities in different regions of the country with varying types of cultural tourism, but that was beyond the scope and resources of the present study.

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